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Remarks:

The remarks presented herein are believed to be fully responsive to the Office Action dated July 16, 2004. Claims 1-24 are pending in the application.

PREVIOUSLY FILED INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that the Information Disclosure Statement submitted with the Response mailed April 15, 2004 failed to comply with 37 CFR §1.98(a)(2) because it did not include a copy of the cited references. However, the Information Disclosure Statement that was attached to the previous Response was a copy of the Information Disclosure Statement originally mailed on March 13, 2002. A copy of the cited references was included with the original mailing of the Information Disclosure Statement. Therefore, Applicants submit that the Information Disclosure Statement was properly filed and the references should be considered. Attached is another copy of the previously filed Information Disclosure Statement. Applicants again respectfully request that the Examiner consider all of the information cited in the Statement and return an initialed copy of the Form PTO-1449 to confirm the Examiner's consideration of the cited information. If the Examiner requires an additional copy of the non-patent references cited in the Form PTO-1449, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

Claims 1- 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Grams et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,579,053. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) for the reasons set forth below.

As set forth in the present application, the present invention is a postal processing facility including a sorting system that receives mail in trays and sorts mail to trays. The facility comprises a receiving and dispatching system that loads trays of sorted mail from a sorting system to transportation fixtures and unloads trays of mail to be sorted

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from transportation fixtures to the sorting system. The receiving and dispatching system may be at a dock area of the postal processing facility to provide substantially direct movement of fixtures between transportation vehicles and the receiving and dispatching system.

The claimed invention thus includes a receiving and dispatching system that loads trays of sorted mail from a sorting system to transportation fixtures and unloads trays of mail to be sorted from transportation fixtures to the sorting system. In stark contrast to the present invention, Grams et al. discloses a robotic containerization and palletizing system that includes a robot that grasps trays from a conveyor system and loads them into a cart or onto a pallet. There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Grams et al. that the system is capable of unloading trays of mail to be sorted from the carts or pallets to a conveyor system or sorting system. Moreover, Grams et al. teaches away from such a system by disclosing that the conveyor 66 conveys the trays into the cells. There is no teaching or suggestion in Grams et al. of a conveyor or any other device or system that would move or convey trays from the cart or pallet or robot and out from the cells to a sorting system.

Applicants submit that the Grams et al. system only moves or loads the trays from the conveyor to the cart or pallet, and there is no disclosure or suggestion that the system also functions to move or unload trays of unsorted mail from carts or pallets to a sorting system. Thus, contrary to the statement in the Office Action, Grams et al. discloses only a load capability and does not disclose a load/unload capability. The text at column 1, lines 15+ in Grams et al. (which the Examiner referred to in the Office Action to support the rejection) only discusses the manual loading of trays into carts or pallets. Not only is there no mention in this section of Grams et al. of unloading the trays, there is also no mention of any sort of system that performs a loading or unloading function.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Grams et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest the postal processing facility of the present invention, particularly as set forth in independent claims 1, 9, 10, 12 and 17, and in the claims

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depending therefrom. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-24 is respectfully requested.


Claims 1-24 remain pending in the application. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-24 are in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is earnestly and respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

GARY P. BURNS ET AL.

By: Van Dyke, Gardner, Linn & Burkhardt, LLP

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